



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/666,339	09/21/2000	Andrew V. Goldberg	7451.0030-00	7008

22852 7590 10/06/2003

FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW, GARRETT & DUNNER
LLP
1300 I STREET, NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20005

EXAMINER

JASMIN, LYNDIA C

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3627

DATE MAILED: 10/06/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/666,339

Applicant(s)

GOLDBERG ET AL.

Examiner

Lynda Jasmin

Art Unit

3627

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 21 September 2000.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 12-16 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-11 and 17-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 21 September 2000 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 4,5,6. 6) ☐ Other:

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:
 - I. Claims 1-11 and 17-20, drawn to "A Method of Vending or Distributing Copies of an Electronic Works", classified in class 705, subclass 37.
 - II. Claims 12-16, drawn to "A Method for Vending a Digital File, classified in class 705, subclass 37.

The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons:

Inventions I and II are related as combination and subcombination. Inventions in this relationship are distinct if it can be shown that (1) the combination as claimed does not require the particulars of the subcombination as claimed for patentability, and (2) that the subcombination has utility by itself or in other combinations (MPEP § 806.05(c)). In the instant case, the combination as claimed does not require the particulars of the subcombination as claimed because deriving a threshold from a sampling of bids does not require a weighting factor for patentability. The subcombination has separate utility and can be used for other method of conducting an auction mechanism using suitable weighting scheme.

2. Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art because of their recognized divergent subject matter, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.
3. This application contains claims directed to the following patentably distinct species of the claimed invention: Species I, Figures 1-3C; Species II, Figures 4A and

Art Unit: 3627

4B; Species III, Figures 5-6B; Species IV, Figure 7; Species V, Figure 8; Species VI, Figure 9; Species VII, Figure 10; Species VIII, Figure 11. Upon initial examination it is the Examiner's findings that the embodiments as exemplified in Figures 7-11 are patentably distinct. Should Applicants disagree, the Examiner respectfully request Applicants to expressly state that the disclosed species are not patentably distinct and provide appropriate evidence and support thereof. Upon providing statement, the Examiner will consider and/or withdrawal the election of Species at that time.

Applicant is required under 35 U.S.C. 121 to elect a single disclosed species for prosecution on the merits to which the claims shall be restricted if no generic claim is finally held to be allowable. Currently, there are no generic claims.

Applicant is advised that a reply to this requirement must include an identification of the species that is elected consonant with this requirement, and a listing of all claims readable thereon, including any claims subsequently added. An argument that a claim is allowable or that all claims are generic is considered nonresponsive unless accompanied by an election.

Upon the allowance of a generic claim, applicant will be entitled to consideration of claims to additional species which are written in dependent form or otherwise include all the limitations of an allowed generic claim as provided by 37 CFR 1.141. If claims are added after the election, applicant must indicate which are readable upon the elected species. MPEP § 809.02(a).

Should applicant traverse on the ground that the species are not patentably distinct, applicant should submit evidence or identify such evidence now of record

Art Unit: 3627

showing the species to be obvious variants or clearly admit on the record that this is the case. In either instance, if the examiner finds one of the inventions unpatentable over the prior art, the evidence or admission may be used in a rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) of the other invention.

4. During a telephone conversation with Karna Nisenwaner on September 24, 2003 a provisional election was made with traverse to prosecute the invention of Group I, claims 1-11, 17-20. Affirmation of this election must be made by applicant in replying to this Office action. Claims 12-16 are withdrawn from further consideration by the examiner, 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

5. Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a request under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

6. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

7. Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In claim 3, the recitation "in which the number of copies that are available to be vended exceeds the number of bids in the plurality of bids" renders the claim indefinite and unclear.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

8. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

9. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

10. Claims 1-11 and 17-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Brett et al. (6,023,685).

Brett et al. discloses an auctioning system and method including: a computer system (12) for receiving a plurality of bids from a plurality of bidders (14, col. 7; lines 36-38), a memory unit for storing the bids (via 16), bid sampling logic for selecting a bid from a

Art Unit: 3627

bidder (via step 44) and a sample of one or more bids from the plurality of bids (under the field SLIMIT via querying on participant database using the received bid as a criterion), a processor (12) for deriving a threshold from the sample of bids (maximum bid), and for using the threshold to determine whether to vend to the bidder (as illustrated in Fig 6b), and network interface unit (via 13) communicates to the bidder. Brett et al. further discloses a payment processing software (via credit card payment system).

Although Brett et al. does not explicitly disclose that the sample does not include the bid from the first or second bidders and comparing first and second bids to first and second threshold, however it is common in competitive sealed auctions to set rules based on reserve prices and evaluating bids that are closest to the reserved price. Thus, one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have provided the query criterion of Brett et al. to include sampling that does not include the actual bid made in order to derive to the best acceptable bid value.

As per selecting the sample of bids in a random fashion or are mutually exclusive. It is common and well known in the business art to select or group bids based on the maximum/minimum values to determine winning bids combination. Thus one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made would have provided selecting sample that are mutually exclusive in order to determine winning bids combination and the Examiner takes Official Notice as such. As per the item for bids being an electronic works send the bidder in a relatively secure manner over a network.

It is the Examiner's position that the type of items offer for bids does not patentably distinguish over Brett et al. since the end result is to select a winning bid.

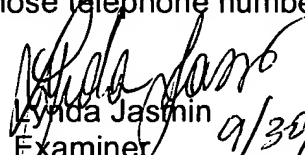
Conclusion

11. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Miller et al. (5,640,569), Prezioso (5,724,488), Brown (6,023,686; 6,167,386), Aggarwal et al. (6,487,541), Fraser et al. (6,560,580), Rackson et al. (2002/0168885817), Shkedy (6,260,024) are cited as art of interest.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Lynda Jasmin whose telephone number is (703) 305-0465. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday- Friday (8:00-5:30) alternate Fridays off.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Robert P Olszewski can be reached on (703) 308-5183. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 308-1113.


Lynda Jasmin
Examiner
Art Unit 3627
9/30/03